

**Journey of Men's Health: an experience report\***  
**Jornada de Saúde do Homem: relato de experiência**  
**Jornada de Salud del Hombre: relato de experiência**

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This study aimed at reporting the experience of nursing students from the *Programa de Educação Tutorial* (Program of Tutorial Education) in mobilizing and engaging the academic community regarding the specificities of Men's Health. The Theory of Mass Communication was used as a methodological approach, considering the mobilization and engagement of the academic community regarding the specificities of Men's Health. The participation of students in the organization of Journey of Men's Health enabled the development of skills related to planning, teamwork methodology, and work evaluation, to perfect capacities that allow one to reach their objectives in a more assertive manner, in addition to fomenting discussions and reflections in the field of Men's Health within the group, the university, and the municipality.

**Descriptors:** Men's health; Public policy; Nursing.

O presente estudo teve como objetivo relatar a experiência de acadêmicos de enfermagem integrantes do Programa de Educação Tutorial na mobilização e engajamento da comunidade acadêmica sobre as especificidades da Saúde do Homem. Utilizou-se como abordagem metodológica a Teoria de Comunicação em Massa, tendo em vista a mobilização e engajamento da comunidade acadêmica sobre as especificidades da Saúde do Homem. A participação dos discentes na organização da Jornada de Saúde do Homem possibilitou o desenvolvimento de habilidades de planejamento, metodologia do trabalho em grupo e a avaliação do trabalho, a fim de atingir aperfeiçoamentos que permitam alcançar os objetivos de uma forma cada vez mais assertiva, além de fomentar discussões e reflexões no âmbito da Saúde do Homem dentro do grupo, da Universidade e no Município.

**Descritores:** Saúde do homem; Política pública; Enfermagem.

El presente estudio tuvo como objetivo relatar la experiencia de académicos de enfermería integrantes del Programa de Educación Tutorial en la movilización y compromiso de la comunidad académica sobre las especificidades de la Salud del Hombre. Se utilizó como abordaje metodológico la Teoría de la Comunicación en Masa, teniendo en cuenta la movilización y compromiso de la comunidad académica sobre las especificidades de la Salud del Hombre. La participación de los estudiantes en la organización de la Jornada de Salud del Hombre posibilitó el desarrollo de habilidades de planeamiento, metodología del trabajo en grupo y la evaluación del trabajo con el fin de conseguir un perfeccionamiento para alcanzar los objetivos de una forma cada vez más asertiva, además de fomentar discusiones y reflexiones en el ámbito de la Salud del Hombre dentro del grupo, de la Universidad y en el Municipio.

**Descriptores:** Salud del hombre; Política pública; Enfermería.

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## INTRODUCTION

The National Policy of Integral Attention to Men's Health (PNAISH) aims at promoting, preventing, and rehabilitating men's health, as well as to contribute to debunk sociocultural paradigms<sup>1</sup>.

The origin of this policy is a Brazilian setting in which men have a low adherence to the health system when it comes to health prevention and promotion and later require more specialized attention, leading to health problems and morbidities and, as a consequence, increases the expenses of the Unified Health System (SUS)<sup>1,2</sup>.

In this policy, the access of the male population to the health services is pointed out as one of the greatest challenges in the setting, and the factors that lead to this are the prejudice men themselves have regarding searching for these services, the culture of sexism, and the labor activities which limit the access to the health units due to their own service hours<sup>1-3</sup>.

Therefore, strategies are required to address this public. They are contextualized to current demands and contemplate the education of critical and generalist professionals, so that they can deal with its specificities. For this type of action, Mass Communication Theory is an adequate conceptual framework.

Aiming at improving the critical formation in universities, *Programas de Educação Tutorial* (Programs of Tutorial Education - PET) were developed. Their objective is to enable moments, during the education of the participants, for reflection and for the furthering of knowledge in many fields, involving the three pillars: teaching, research and extension<sup>2,4-6</sup>.

Also, this critical education becomes essential for nurses, since these professionals are inserted in all sectors of healthcare, and are fundamental for primary care, which is the gateway for the population into the health system. In this line, the actions of the nurse, relating national policy and the male population, involve activities of health education, seeking to prevent diseases and

health problems, and to promote health as early as possible<sup>2,7,8</sup>.

It can also be said that the male public is more exposed to situations that present risk to health, such as: smoking, alcohol and illicit drugs, bad eating habits, and irregular practice of physical activities<sup>9</sup>. More than half a million people die due to violence throughout the world, and men are the main victims. This data has a relevant impact in men's health. Physical aggression, homicide, suicide, and traffic accidents are some of the risky situations in which they are more often involved than women are<sup>9</sup>.

According to a study conducted in the city of Uberaba-MG, from 1996 to 2013, the most common causes of death for the male population from 20 to 59 years of age were circulatory system diseases (23.4%), followed by external morbidity and mortality causes (21.5%) and neoplasias (17.5%)<sup>10</sup>.

From this perspective, the following question is raised: *How to engage and mobilize students from the health field, such as nursing students, during their education, regarding the specificities that are related to men's health?*

Considering this setting, and the fact that processes of health communication have a main role in the context of assistance, together with the fact that one must raise awareness of health professionals regarding approaches to men's health, the PET Nursing, from the Graduation Nursing Course in the Federal University of Triângulo Mineiro - UFTM has been carrying out, since 2012, the Journey of Men's Health.

Such activity is mainly destined to the male public and to the academic professionals from the health field from Uberaba-MG and aims at transforming this reality in the city. Therefore, this study aims at reporting the experience of Nursing students from the Program of Tutorial Education in mobilizing and engaging the academic community regarding the specificities of Men's Health.

**METHOD**

This is an experience report from undergraduate Nursing students, regarding the mobilization and engagement in the academic community when it comes to specificities in the approach to men's health.

The initiative involved the organization of an event called Journey of Men's Health, connected to the members of the nursing graduation course PET, and conducted from 22 to 24 November 2018.

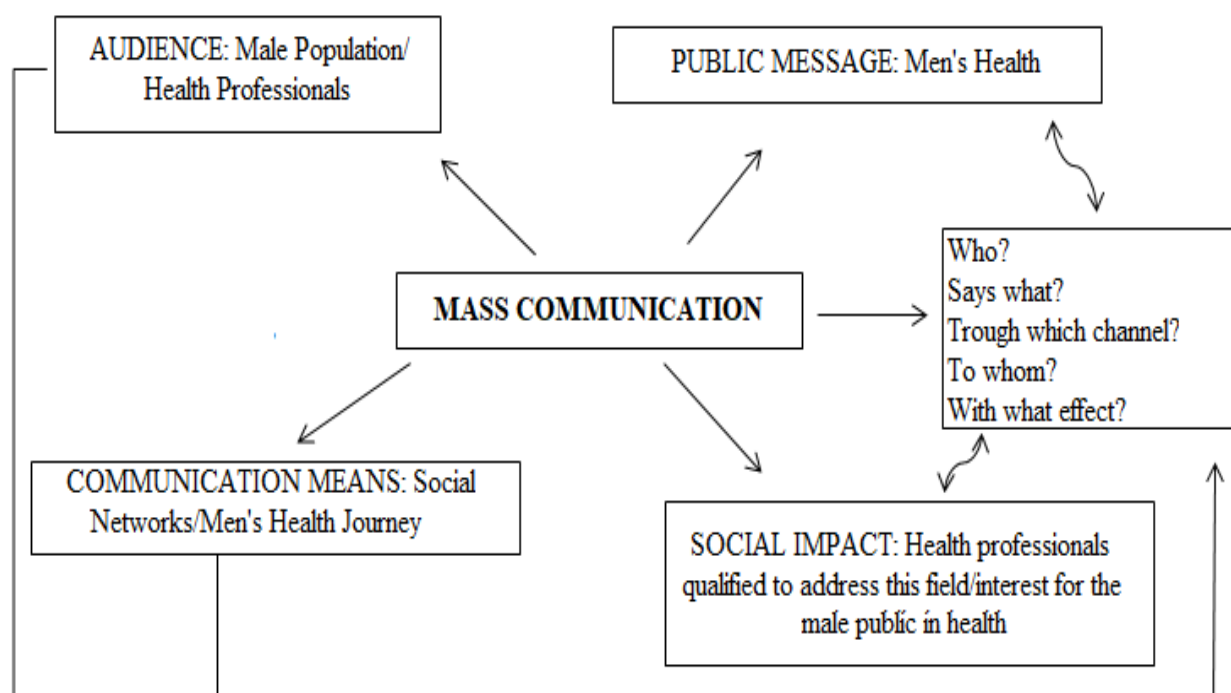
This initiative has, as its theoretical framework, the Mass Communication Theory. In the contemporary, globalization-influenced society, mass communication takes place constantly. The many different models of communication make it so thousands of people are reached with information throughout the world<sup>6</sup>.

How is it that communication reaches people, what is involved in mass

communication, the means through which it is transmitted, how it affects society, and which are the transformations generated are important issues, that the communicator needs to analyze before exposing a message<sup>6</sup>.

Mass communication tends to be vast and heterogeneous, with public and open messages that are mostly unilateral. Technology makes the access to information easier, making the transmission faster to mass audiences. There are three basic functions to communication, which are: environment surveillance, correlation between parts of society in response to the environment, and the transmission of social legacies to future generations. These questions aim to contextualize the global communication process succinctly, considering who says what, through which channel, to whom, and with what effect<sup>6</sup>.

**Image 1: Mass Communication**



**Source:** Adapted from McQUAIL, 2003<sup>6</sup>.

## RESULTS

The Journey of Men's Health is an event conducted by the PET nursing UFTM. It will soon have its seventh edition, aiming to reach the male population of Uberaba-MG as well as students and professionals from the health field, to improve the current setting of low male adherence to the city's health services.

Considering this, the Journey used the Mass Communication Theory to disseminate relevant information about healthcare, with a higher potential audience among men. The event takes place every November since 2012, a month called "*Blue November*" by a Ministry of Health campaign whose aim is fighting prostate cancer.

Therefore, the PET group discussed the theme analyzing the local context of the city Uberaba-MG, as well as the country as a whole, since the rates with which men seek the service are low. This was the setting in which this event targeted at the male audience started to be conducted, addressing several different aspects.

The event takes place in the in the UFTM theater in three consecutive days. There are speeches whose subject is decided according to questionnaires on the satisfaction of those who participated in the previous events. The subjects can be: paternity, prostate cancer, alcoholism and other drugs, cardiovascular diseases, and basic life support. In 2016, it included debates conducted by professionals regarding the following themes: body image care, gender, and men's health.

As the years pass, the event has been receiving a great number of participants from its target audience, which consequently has been increasing yearly. However, the participation is more frequent among undergraduate students from the health field and professionals on the field than it is among the city's male population.

It is announced through social networks such as the PET Nursing page and Facebook, where an event is created, as well as through TV, radio, the university's website, and leaflets that are spread in the university and some other points of the city.

A positive aspect to this end is the time of the event, which always starts at 6 p.m., so that the male public can have a greater participation. The entire academic community is invited, as well as the workers from the UFTM General Hospital. The city's companies are invited to participate and to let their workers go to the event, as a way to promote their health.

One of the results found from the questionnaire that is distributed, is that the participants of the event find positive the way in which the themes are exhibited, through speeches and debates, in which the public can interact with the speakers and raise relevant questions and discussions regarding men's health.

Therefore, the Journey of Men's Health has increasingly become highly relevant for the population of the city and also for the formation of new professionals in the health field, who start to notice how important it is to address men's health in the health systems, especially in primary care, through health promotion and disease prevention.

## DISCUSSION

The causes of male mortality are, in general, results of life and health practices. Still, culturally, men seek health services less frequently, and when they do, they seek emergency services. Some factors contribute for this, such as: the fear that they might find they have a disease, sexism, the embarrassment of exposing oneself to a health professional, in addition to the shortcomings of the health services themselves when it comes to creating actions specifically targeted at the males<sup>11</sup>.

A study conducted with managers of many regions who have Family Health Strategies points out that 10% of male individuals do not seek attention because they do not have a health problem, 10% do because of fear, and 30% due to cultural values<sup>12</sup>.

Considering this, actions that raise the awareness of men regarding health prevention are very important. To carry them out, the health services need qualified professionals and incentives to find

strategies to insert males into the health services, in addition to confronting and diminishing the barriers found in this sector, to improve the quality of health services that are offered to this population<sup>13</sup>.

The implementation of the PNAISH has been gradually taking place throughout the national territory. For the policy to be strengthened, cultural, political, and socioeconomic barriers must be overcome. The attributions of the nurse within the policy are based on health education, which in turn aims to promote and offer guidance regarding health and disease prevention.

Another essential contribution of the nurse is the socioeconomic and cultural survey of the population<sup>2</sup>. However, some professionals who work face-to-face with the patients have cure-focused perspectives which are not quite supported by the policy<sup>14</sup>.

Other professionals from the health field demonstrate not to know exactly what this policy is about and how to plan their actions taking it into account integrally. That means that, when men's health is concerned, they focus on health issues related to prostate neoplasms, characterizing care fragmentation<sup>12,15</sup>.

Considering this, undergraduate Nursing students from the PET Nursing, with the creation of the Journey of Men's Health, sought strategies that could reach the target population, through results in the didactic and practical preparation for health promotion and disease prevention.

In this occasion, an event made for the community was used as a strategy. Its protagonists were the students, who thus developed experiences in planning, construction and development of teamwork methodologies, and later, evaluated the project to verify whether it had achieved its goals.

With each edition of the Journey, the number of participants noticeably increased, as did the suggestions for further editions. However, the male public who works in the companies in the city still need to reach further, since their participation is very small when compared to that of other target-

audiences. That is also the result of other published works<sup>1-3</sup>.

The way in which the themes are addressed, round tables and dynamic speeches, favoring the participation of the public in discussions. This strategy has shown very positive results in the evaluations. This is in accordance with the Mass Communication Theory, and with the importance which is given to men's health by the community, right after the speeches, according to what the public says<sup>16</sup>.

Through actions such as this, the undergraduates in the health field, especially those in nursing, have been forming and strengthening ideals of health problem prevention and health promotion, as well as teamwork, which will be their reality as professionals. The objective of the speeches carried out in this event is not only to broaden the field of vision of the academic population regarding the theme, but also to show the male public the importance of understanding their health-disease processes, and how to prevent against certain health problems and promote health<sup>17</sup>. The PET group is an important tool for the student to understand these concepts, and an opportunity for maturing and becoming more critic<sup>16</sup>.

Participating will favor the daily lives of these future professionals, encouraging them to be holistic and creative, and thus, capable of elaborating strategies that can reach their objectives according to the situation of the community, and capable of working, as well as possible, as a group<sup>5</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

Although this study reports the experience of student engagement in the organization of a local event, it can be generalized to other localities, since, currently, innovative and creative strategies, such as those used in the event, related to men's health promotion, have seldom been explored.

Considering the local and national setting, the students, Nursing undergraduate members of the PET, proposed this yearly event that would address men's health and reiterate the National Policy of Integral

Attention to Men's Health, since the part of the population who seek health services and care for the prevention of their own diseases is still small.

That said, the students had the opportunity of planning an event which now happens every year in the city of Uberaba-MG, and to develop abilities regarding planning, and teamwork methodology, in this case, using the Theory of Mass Communication as base, and evaluating the work as a means to perfect it and reach its objectives more successfully.

The Program of Tutorial Education offers many opportunities for the students to develop abilities and activities related to teaching, research, and extension. Within it, teamwork is very strong, preparing the future professionals for reality.

Therefore, it can be concluded that this event foments even more the discussions and reflections in the scope of Men's Health, in the University and in the City. It should be highlighted how important the theme discussed in this event is. It is something that interests and requires action from all courses in the health field, which have a commitment to healthcare and multidisciplinary work in the scope of men's health promotion, prevention, and intervention.

During the organization of this journey, PET Nursing faced and overcame many challenges, and others will certainly pose themselves. However, every year, it has been increasingly consolidated as one of the few actions in the city targeted at men's health, in addition to seeking new strategies to reach an even greater portion of its target audience, so that they can look at their own health differently.

Also, this activity has been enabling the formation of future nurses capable of having a broad view of reality and its community, also developing abilities such as creativity and critical reasoning in educational health practices. Therefore, this experience supports the actions of the policy from the perspective of education.

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#### CONTRIBUTIONS

**Jonathan William de Oliveira Gomes, Nayara de Freitas Azevedo, Gabriela Garcia Soares, and Renata Bernardes Lacerda**, took part in the writing of the article. **Luan Augusto Alves Garcia and Jurema Luiz Ribeiro Gonçalves** contributed in the critical revision.

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